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PLANNING DEPARTMENT - 9 NOV 2010 RECEIVED
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From: Richard Aston
Sent: 09 November 2010 09:40
To: Planning
Subject: FW: Response for planning application: N6/2010/2055/MA
Attachments: 20101108 Former Shredded Wheat Factory Welwyn Garden City E.doc

Please acknowledge

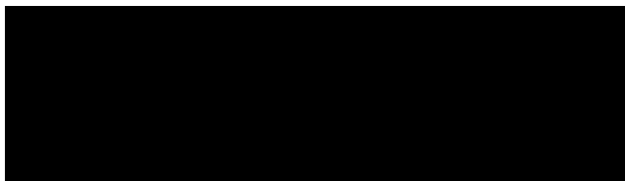
From: [Redacted]
Sent: 08 November 2010 18:32
To: Richard Aston
Cc: hugh.sowerby@dp9.co.uk
Subject: Response for planning application: N6/2010/2055/MA

Dear Richard

Full planning permission for part demolition, repair, restoration, extension and conversion of the former Shredded Wheat factory complex to provide retail (A1 & A3), business (b1), heritage centre (D1), energy centre, new leisure centre building and civic square building including residential and retail (A1 to A5). Associated alterations to existing vehicular and pedestrian access and highway layout within and around the site, including the creation of two vehicular access ramps to basement parking, hard and soft landscaping, the provision of a civic square, park, public and private open space, pedestrian walkways to include the upgrade of the existing pedestrian footpath over the railway line and associated enabling works. Outline planning permission for development of land to the west and south of the shredded wheat factory to comprise the following uses: Retail (A1 & A5), business (B1), hotel (C1), residential, to include: Houses, flats, care home and YMCA (C2 & C3); doctors surgery and pharmacy (D1); with all matters reserved apart from means of access - Former Shredded Wheat factory complex and land adjoining, Roadwater Road West, Welwyn Garden City, AL7 3AY

I attach Sport England's formal response to the consultation on the above planning application. Please contact me if you have any queries.
 Regards

Dale Greetham
 Assistant Planner



Creating sporting opportunities in every community

Sport England (East Region), Crescent House, 19 The Crescent, Bedford, MK40 2QP

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Your ref: N6/2010/2055/MA
Our ref: E/WH/2010/22105/N/340

08/11/2010

Mr Richard Aston
Principal Development Control Officer
North Area Team
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Council Offices
Campus East
Welwyn Garden City
Herts
AL8 6AE

Dear Sir

FULL PLANNING PERMISSION FOR PART DEMOLITION, REPAIR, RESTORATION, EXTENSION AND CONVERSION OF THE FORMER SHREDDED WHEAT FACTORY COMPLEX TO PROVIDE RETAIL (A1 & A3), BUSINESS (B1), HERITAGE CENTRE (D1), ENERGY CENTRE, NEW LEISURE CENTRE BUILDING AND CIVIC SQUARE BUILDING INCLUDING RESIDENTIAL AND RETAIL (A1 TO A5). ASSOCIATED ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING VEHICULAR AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS AND HIGHWAY LAYOUT WITHIN AND AROUND THE SITE, INCLUDING THE CREATION OF TWO VEHICULAR ACCESS RAMPS TO BASEMENT PARKING, HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING, THE PROVISION OF A CIVIC SQUARE, PARK, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE OPEN SPACE, PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS TO INCLUDE THE UPGRADE OF THE EXISTING PEDESTRIAN FOOTPATH OVER THE RAILWAY LINE AND ASSOCIATED ENABLING WORKS. OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT OF LAND TO THE WEST AND SOUTH OF THE SHREDDED WHEAT FACTORY TO COMPRISE THE FOLLOWING USES: RETAIL (A1 & A5), BUSINESS (B1), HOTEL (C1), RESIDENTIAL, TO INCLUDE: HOUSES, FLATS, CARE HOME AND YMCA (C2 & C3); DOCTORS SURGERY AND PHARMACY (D1); WITH ALL MATTERS RESERVED APART FROM MEANS OF ACCESS - FORMER SHREDDED WHEAT FACTORY COMPLEX AND LAND ADJOINING, ROADWATER ROAD WEST, WELWYN GARDEN CITY, AL7 3AY

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the above planning application.

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the above planning application. I would advise that Sport England is not a statutory consultee on this planning application for the proposed development under the terms of the General Permitted Development Procedure Order 1995 (as amended) as the development does not affect a playing field as defined by Statutory Instruments SI 1996/1817 and SI 2009/453.

Full planning permission is sought for part demolition, repair, restoration, extension and conversion of the former Shredded Wheat factory complex to provide retail (A1 & A3), business (B1), heritage centre (D1), energy centre, new leisure centre building and civic square building including residential and retail (A1 to

A5) and associated alterations and enabling works including the provision of a civic square, park and public and private open space.

Furthermore, outline planning permission is sought for development of land to the west and south of the Shredded Wheat factory to provide retail (A1 & A5), business (B1), hotel (C1), residential, to include houses, flats, care home and YMCA (C2 & C3), doctors surgery and pharmacy (D1); with all matters reserved apart from means of access.

As a non-statutory consultee, Sport England would like to make comments on indoor sports facility provision, in relation to the principle of the proposed leisure centre and the design of the sports facility and also on outdoor sports facility provision relating to the proposed residential development.

INDOOR SPORTS FACILITY PROVISION

As part of this planning application a leisure centre is proposed. This will provide the following facilities:

- Swimming pool (L-shaped with a 25 metre lap pool, shallower beach section, wave machine and flumes which will discharge into a smaller raised pool) with flexibility to allow for group or club use at various times of the day
- Gym
- Wet and dry side changing rooms
- Entrance, reception, shop and a café
- Service elements
- Offices

Principle of the proposed Leisure Centre

Planning Policy Objective 7 of Sport England's Spatial Planning for Sport and Active Recreation: Development Control Guidance Note (2009) Appendix 2, www.sportengland.org/facilities_planning/developing_policies_for_sport.aspx supports the development of new facilities that will secure opportunities to take part in sport. I consider that the proposed development would offer the following benefits from a sports perspective:

- It would provide a high quality new swimming pool and health and fitness suite in Welwyn Garden City;
- The proposed development would respond positively to meeting the needs identified in the emerging Welwyn Hatfield Sports Facility Strategy (Draft) (July 2010), in relation to swimming pools, although additional pools cannot be justified at present to meet overall demand in relation to quantitative need, in relation to accessibility, some residents of Welwyn Garden City are unable to access an unrestricted public pool within 10 minutes;
- In relation to public consultation regarding swimming pools, the emerging Welwyn Hatfield Sports Facility Strategy (Draft) (July 2010) states 'a demand for some swimming space (at least a 25m pool) within Welwyn Garden City has been identified not only from the Sports Clubs that were consulted but also by the residents of the town itself'. The Broadwater Road West Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (December 2008) recognises the strong public demand for a swimming pool to be considered as part of any redevelopment of this site;

- The proposed development would also respond positively to meeting the needs identified in the emerging Welwyn Hatfield Sports Facility Strategy (Draft) (July 2010), in relation to health and fitness suites, as although there is little justification for additional health and fitness suites at this stage, the proposed development would contribute towards meeting the future requirements of the areas, identified as a need for an additional 120 (180 stations taking into account a 10% increase in participation) stations by 2026.

I have consulted the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) who have made the following comments:

- The swimming pool provision in Welwyn Hatfield is made up of Local Authority, commercial and education. When considering the access types of the facilities it is believed that there is a slight under provision in the area;
- There is only one swimming pool in Welwyn garden City, and a central community pool would be a big advantage as it would reduce the need for travel to neighbouring towns for swimming. The only swimming pool in Welwyn Garden City, which is to the north of the town, is a school swimming pool, is only 20 metres long and was built in the 1960's, has limited access for the public and has a limited life span.
- The ASA would consider the proposed swimming pool important to providing adequate swimming provision in the town and have a wider context across the LA district.

In view of the benefits identified above, I consider that the proposed development would clearly accord with Sport England's planning policy objective. Sport England therefore supports the principle of the indoor sports facility element of this full planning application. I can also advise that the ASA and Herts Sports Partnership (the County Sports Partnership) are supportive of the principle of the proposed development.

Sports Facility Design

In relation to the design of the new sports facilities, Sport England and the Amateur Swimming Association have reviewed the proposed design and layout of the facilities. Sport England have assessed the proposals against the relevant design guidance (please find a link to this below). The design and layout is broadly supported and there are not considered to be any major issues that would prevent the proposed facilities from being fit for purpose which would have influenced our assessment of the proposals as a non-statutory consultee. However, advisory design comments / questions are appended to this response which the applicant is encouraged to consider before finalising the design and layout of the sports facilities.

For information, Sport England's relevant design guidance which includes 'Swimming Pool Design' (2008), 'Swimming Pools Checklist' and 'Fitness and Exercise Spaces' (2008) are available to view on Sport England's website at http://www.sportengland.org/facilities_planning/design_guidance_notes.aspx.

OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITY PROVISION FOR THE PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

In relation to outdoor sport, no on-site provision is made for meeting the additional needs generated by the proposed development. However, a teenage play area equivalent to a half size basketball court is

proposed, although this proposal would not provide formal open space suitable for outdoor sports e.g. playing pitches and courts. Furthermore, no financial contribution is currently proposed in relation to off-site outdoor sports facility provision.

The overall development will provide 344 dwellings which will generate an estimated additional population of about 860 people (estimated by multiplying the proposed number of dwellings by the national average occupancy rate of 2.5). This new population will generate its own needs for sports facilities, which if not met by the development, will place additional pressures on existing facilities.

In relation to need, the emerging Welwyn Hatfield Sports facility Strategy (Draft) (July 2010) identifies deficiencies in outdoor sports facility provision within the Welwyn Garden City Area.

It is considered that the proposed development will not meet the additional demands on outdoor sports facility provision that it will generate. I am therefore concerned that the development would result in more demand being placed on existing facilities in the Welwyn Garden City area, which may already be used to their capacity. As well as being contrary to Sport England's policy, this would also conflict with the advice in PPG17 "Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation" (2002), which advises (in paragraph 23) local authorities to ensure that provision is made for local sports and recreation facilities (either through an increase in the number of facilities or through improvements to existing facilities), where planning permission is granted for new developments.

As an alternative to on-site outdoor sports facilities provision, Sport England would at least expect a financial contribution to be secured, in lieu of this, which would be used towards providing new, or improving existing facilities. This approach is likely to be the most appropriate in relation to the proposed development as making on-site outdoor sports provision within the application site is unlikely to be practical or viable in view of the size of the site and the number of dwellings proposed. Local authorities and playing field users such as sports clubs usually prefer playing pitch provision to be provided on larger multi-pitch sites with appropriate supporting facilities than small scale facilities being provided within residential developments that have inadequate supporting facilities for operational and sports development reasons.

Sport England therefore objects to the lack of outdoor sports facility provision made for meeting the needs of the proposed development. However, I would be prepared to withdraw the objection, if it was confirmed that off-site outdoor sports facility provision would be made in the form of an appropriate financial contribution (made to Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and secured through a planning obligation) which would be used towards the provision or improvement of off-site outdoor sport facilities. Sport England would be happy to advise on the level of an appropriate financial contribution. Alternatively, appropriate on-site outdoor sports facility provision would need to be made or, in accordance with PPG17 guidance, it would need to be satisfactorily demonstrated to Sport England, through an up-to-date outdoor sports facility assessment, that there is adequate existing provision in the catchment to meet the outdoor sports facility needs of the development.

I hope that these comments can be given full consideration when a decision is made. Please contact me if you have any queries. I would be grateful if you could advise me of the decision on the application, when available, by e-mailing or sending me the decision notice.

If design considerations are material to the determination of this planning application then we would be happy to meet with the applicant to discuss these.

Yours sincerely



Dale Greetham
Assistant Planner

cc Hugh Sowerby, DP9



Sports Facility Design Comments

Reception

- Sport England promote the use of a draft lobby at the main entrance to aid the reception environment.
- The turnstiles would normally be post reception, in order to allow access to the reception whilst also maintaining control of access to the building
- It is recommended that the first aid room has a direct exit to the outside so that a casualty can be loaded directly into the ambulance. This would require a change of location.

Swimming Pool

- The pool is currently designed to accommodate both lane and leisure swimming – does this reflect local need? Can the pool deliver on the learn to swim priorities that may be required locally through educational need and community need with the current design?
- If the swimming pool is to remain as proposed it is suggested that the swimming pools would benefit from being the other way round i.e. with the 25m run being parallel to the changing rooms (shallow end at the entrance end). This will allow people that bring other people to learn to swim classes to be able to observe what is happening from the seating in the café area.
- In relation to the 25m section of the pool the flume should be moved so it does not go over this at all (it is thought that there is room to achieve this) and the raised section (labelled events) at the deep end should remain at a similar level (deck level) all around the swimming pool – both of these points relate to access and sight lines for staff, particularly when the swimming pool is in use for club/teaching, when good contact between staff on the poolside and those in the water is required
- The proposed width of the 25m section of the pool is 12m. Sport England's Swimming Pool Design guidance document (referenced above) recommends that the width of a 6 lane pool should be 13 metres wide while the width of a 5 lane pool should be 10.5 metres
- It would appear that spectators are encouraged to be on poolside and use toilets that lead from the pool surround. It can not be understood from the detail provided how these areas are separated (if at all) but this would encourage contamination, as would the food serving area, into the wet side if not carefully managed
- Changing spaces – the current level of provision is 94 plus group change. Based on the volume of water space provided approximately 190 change spaces are needed to cope with average demand. This is based on the calculation model identified in the guidance (link provided above). This needs to be considered alongside the programming of the facility to feel confident that any final proposals can accommodate user numbers.
- Toilets - In terms of toilet provision, the current level of provision is 13 WC's and 6 urinals. For the amount of water space proposed 10 WC's and 6 urinals are required.
- Showers – currently 17 are provided, this could be rationalised to 12 to 14. It is recommended that all showers are provided in central areas and not within toilet areas. This means that they

are accessible by all. It is advantageous to provide some of the showers are cubicle showers to aid privacy. Showers should be centrally located to facilitate both pre and post swim usage.

Changing Accommodation

Wet Side (Ground Floor):

- An accessible change is required in wet side area.

Dry Side (First Floor):

- An accessible change is required in dry side and not just a toilet.
- In terms of layout this is not ideal. The toilets should be accessed first. This allows those users who are not getting changed to access the toilets. This then leads to the change area with showers at the rear. With the current proposed layout anyone wishing to use the toilet will have to access the change
- In terms of capacity, the usable space in each is around 34 (this is presuming that each square within the changing rooms on plan Detailed Proposals: Leisure Centre (Building A) Proposed Plans (568_07_210) are changing spaces as apposed to lockers). 1 change space per gym station or 1 change space per 5 sqm of gym floor space are the recommended ratios. The proposed dry side changing areas therefore currently represent an over provision
- There are currently 6 showers proposed. 1 shower per 6 change spaces is the recommended ratio. The proposed provision of showers therefore currently represents an under provision (as mentioned above, this is presuming that each square within the changing rooms are changing spaces as apposed to lockers)
- Lockers – these can be provided within the change area or outside. It is recommended to provide small valuables lockers externally to facilitate those not using the change area. Lockers should not be provided behind the changing spaces as this compromises access at peak time. There should be 2.5 lockers per change space to allow for change overs and a number of lockers being out of use. Accessible lockers need to be provided outside of the accessible change

Health and Fitness Suite

- Natural light should be encouraged whilst avoiding glare
- Views over the pool should be included where appropriate (whilst being aware of child protection issues)
- A plumbed in water fountain should be included to serve the gym

Second Floor Facilities

- The toilet located on the second floor needs to be accessible

General

- There is significant office space on the second floor. This may be useful for centre and local club usage but this needs to be clarified as it is a significant expense to the scheme.
- In relation to the long term sustainability of the proposed Leisure Centre to may be useful to consider the mixture of facilities included i.e. would the inclusion of a larger gym or a dance studio be beneficial from a revenue generation perspective?

Design comments prepared by:

Nick Boulter (Relationship Manager – Facilities & Planning, Sport England) and Tom Neale (ASA Facilities, Amateur Swimming Association)

October 2010